

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 004243
ORIGIN AF-08

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TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 004243

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, PINS, AO, CG, UN

SUBJECT: CABINDAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE

REF: A) KINSAHSA 0024 B(KINSHASA 0065; C) KINSHASA 126

1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES PROMPT RESPONSES BY EMBASSY TO OUR QUERY ON THE CONDITION AND STATUS OF THE CABINDAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE AND YOUR THOUGHTFUL ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION. INFORMATION PROVIDED BY WEISNER THROUGH EMBASSY IS DISTURBING AND RAISES SEVERAL PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS FOR US WHICH WE DESIRE TO PURSUE FURTHER.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: YOUR COMMENT THAT UNHCR REP. IN ZAIRE NOEL HAS SHOWN PREFERENCE FOR MPLA IS PARTICULARLY DIS-QUIETING. WE WOULD APPRECIATE BACKGROUND INFORMATION BOTH ON NOEL AND ON HIS ACTIVITIES IN ZAIRE THAT WOULD SUPPORT SUCH AN OPINION. ARMED WITH THESE FACTS WE INTEND TO RAISE
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THE MATTER OF NOEL'S BIAS AT HIGHEST LEVEL OF UNHCR. FYI: IN DECEMBER 1975, AT THE REQUEST OF THE GOZ, THE UNHCR PROVIDED 300,000 DOLLARS IN ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO THEIR MISSION IN ZAIRE EXPRESSLY EARMARKED FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CABINDAN AND OTHER ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE. NOEL THEREFORE HAS A MANDATE TO ASSIST IN THIS AREA.

3. WE FULLY UNDERSTAND YOUR RELUCTANCE TO UNDERTAKE AN ON-
THE-SPOT REPORT FOR FEAR OF AROUSING FALSE HOPES BY GOZ
AND CABINDANS. HOWEVER, WE HOPE YOU COULD RECONSIDER THIS
JUDGMENT. WE ARE NOW CONSIDERING WHAT FURTHER ACTION WE
MAY WANT TO TAKE TO RELIEVE THE PLIGHT OF THESE REFUGEES.
BEFORE MAKING A DETERMINATION TO COMMIT U.S.
RESOURCES FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THESE REFUGEES, WE WOULD
PREFER THAT AN OFFICER VISIT THE AREA AND PROVIDE AN ANAL-
YSIS OF THE SITUATION. THIS PREFERENCE IS BASED ON OUR
PAST EXPERIENCE THAT REPORTS FROM VOLAGS REQUIRE INDEPEN-
DENT VERIFICATION, WHEN AT ALL POSSIBLE. FURTHER, AN AD-
DITIONAL OPINION STRENGTHENS OUR ARGUMENT IN PRESENTING
PROBLEM TO UNHCR OR CONGRESS AND PRECLUDES DANGER OF UN-
NECESSARY OR PRECIPITATE ACTION. WE DO NOT INSIST ON
VISIT AND LEAVE FINAL JUDGMENT TO YOU. IF A VISIT IS MADE
IT SHOULD, OF COURSE, BE LOW-KEY AND NO MENTION OF THE
POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT OR INDIRECT U.S. AID SHOULD BE MADE.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS MATTER SHOULD SOON BE BROUGHT TO
THE ATTENTION OF THE UNHCR. OUR PREFERENCE IS THAT THE
ISSUE BE RAISED WITH THEM BY THE GOZ AND SUPPORTED BY THE
U.S., RATHER THAN VICE VERSA. SUBJECT TO YOUR CONCURRENCE,
WE SUGGEST THAT YOU DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH THE GOZ TO DE-

TERMINE THEIR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION. SUCH A DISCUS-
SION COULD BE BASED ON THE REPORT OF WIESNER AND/OR THE
VISIT BY EMBASSY OFFICIAL. ANY U.S. APPROACH TO THE GOZ
SHOULD BE BASED ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS AND YOU SHOULD
INFORM GOZ THAT OUR INTEREST EVOLVES FROM OUR BROADER IN-
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TEREST IN REFUGEES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA RATHER THAN ANY
SUPPORT FOR FLEC. YOU MAY MENTION THAT WE HAVE ALREADY
STATED WE WOULD CONTRIBUTE APPROXIMATELY 15 MILLION DOL-
LARS IN FOODSTUFFS AND TRANSPORTATION TO THE UNHCR REFUGEE
PROGRAM INSIDE ANGOLA, WITH SIMILAR HUMANITARIAN INTEN-
TIONS.

5. FYI: DEPT PREFERS TO FOCUS ON UNHCR AS AGENCY WITH
PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS PROBLEM AND TO ENCOURAGE
THEM TO BECOME MORE ACTIVE WITH CABINDAN REFUGEES. WE
WILL CONSIDER PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO VOLAGS ONLY IF
UNHCR UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO MEET THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 004243

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 004243

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